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ABSTRACT

Every 10 years since 1790, the U.S. government has taken a census to enumerate the population to apportion seats in the House of Representatives. In each decennial census, citizens from the famous to the unsung and the infamous appear. They include favorite figures of literature, such as Laura Ingalls and Almanzo Wilder, who were not just characters in a television series but real people who appeared in the census many times, including those of 1880 in the Dakota Territory and 1900 in Missouri. This lesson plan uses two census sheets (one from 1880 and one from 1900) from the hundreds of thousands of pages in the custody of the National Archives as primary source documents for learning about the census. The lesson plan provides teaching activities, including history and civics and government standards correlation activities, vocabulary development, documents analysis activities, map skills, and research and synthesis activities. Census sheets and a written document analysis worksheet are also included. (BT)

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June 20, 2002

TEACHING WITH DOCUMENTS**Little House in the Census:
Almanzo and Laura Ingalls
Wilder**

SO 033 956

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Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan:

Little House in the Census: Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder

Background

Every 10 years since 1790, the U.S. Government has taken a census to enumerate the population so as to apportion seats in the House of Representatives. Census enumerators canvass their districts house-to-house, collecting information about individuals and households on large forms called population schedules.



In each decennial census, Americans from the famous to the unsung and the infamous appear, including favorite figures of literature. Laura Ingalls, Almanzo Wilder, and their families of the popular *Little House on the Prairie* series were not merely characters of book and television. They were real people who appeared in the census many times, including those of 1880 in the Dakota Territory and 1900 in Missouri.

The information briefly tallied in the census reports gives us glimpses of the drama so richly and lovingly expanded upon by Laura Ingalls Wilder in her tales. For example, in the 1880 census, the records show that Mary, Laura's sister, was blind, but provided "help in keeping house." Enumerators in that census were instructed not to make such a note unless a daughter contributed substantially to the welfare of the household.

Thus, an imaginative researcher can surmise that Mary lived a productive life despite her blindness. One can confirm this hypothesis by reading the *Little House* books, learning that Mary attended and graduated from the Iowa School of the Blind.

The census sheets shown are two pages of the hundreds of thousands of pages in the custody of the National Archives. The National Archives holds original and microfilm copies of enumeration schedules from 1790 to 1870 and microfilm

copies only of the 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 schedules. The microfilm copies of these schedules are available to researchers. Most of the 1890 census was destroyed by fire in 1921, but microfilm of surviving fragments is also open for examination. To protect the privacy of people enumerated during a census, the records are closed to research for 72 years. The release date for the 1930 census will be 2002 [<http://1930census.archives.gov/>]. The schedules are part of the Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29.

The Ingalls and Wilder families can be found in the 1880 census of the Dakota Territory, Kingsburg County, T9, roll 113, enumeration district 87, supervisor's district 15, pages 146a and 147c, line 28 (document 1). In the 1900 census the married couple, Laura and Almanzo, appears in the schedule of Missouri, Wright County, T623, roll 908, enumeration district 152, supervisor's district 8, p. 226a, line 42 (document 2).

Census records for many states are incomplete. Before 1830, often only the number of persons in an enumeration district was forwarded to Washington, DC. Schedules from 1790 through 1840 give names of the heads of households only; other family members and slaves are tallied by age and sex. With each succeeding census, additional information was gathered, as can be seen in the examples from 1880 and 1900.

The National Archives has microfilmed all the available census schedules and the indexes to them. These microfilm rolls are arranged alphabetically by state and thereunder alphabetically by county. Usually, all of the schedules for one county are on the same roll; some rolls contain records for several counties. Microfilm copies of census schedules are available for use in the research rooms of the National Archives in Washington, DC, and its regional facilities. In addition, many state archives, state historical societies, and university and public libraries, and federal depository libraries have collections of census microfilm for researchers' use.

Information about microfilm publications related to the census schedules is available in the NARA Archival Information Locator database [http://www.archives.gov/research_room/nail/index.html]. This information includes how to order, where to view, and how to rent copies of microfilm.

The Documents

Document 1: Page from 1880 Census
National Archives and Records
Administration
Records of the Bureau of the Census
Record Group 29

Document 2: Page from 1900 Census
National Archives and Records
Administration
Records of the Bureau of the Census
Record Group 29

Lesson Resources

Standards Correlations

Teaching Activities

Document Analysis Worksheet

Page URL: [http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/laura_ingalls_wilder/
laura_ingalls_wilder.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/laura_ingalls_wilder/laura_ingalls_wilder.html)

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Teaching Activities

Standards Correlations

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

- Era 6 -The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)
 - Standard 2 -Demonstrate understanding of how massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

- Standard II.B.1. -Explain how certain characteristics tend to distinguish American society from most other societies.

Cross-curricular Connections

Share these documents and teaching suggestions with your history, language arts, math, and geography colleagues.

Vocabulary Development

1. Many terms in your explanation of the census and in these documents need to be identified for students. Ask students to locate the following terms in the documents and to use classroom resources (textbooks and reference books) to explain each term: census, document, enumeration district, incorporated, mortgage, nativity, owned free, population schedule, and supervisor's district.

Analyzing the Document

2. Instruct students to examine the documents.
Blank census forms are available from Familytreemaker.com at <http://www.genealogy.com>.)
 - a. Ask students to figure out the column headings, the number of families represented, their place of origin, their level of education, and their economic status.

- b. The 1880 census ^{Note} gives Laura's age as 13; the 1900 census ^{Note} as 32. Both censuses were taken in June. Which is correct? How do you account for the error?
- c. Using the questions from the 1900 census, direct students to conduct a census of their own households.
- d. Direct students to compare and contrast the responses to the questions in 1880, 1900, and the census the students made of their households. Discuss with them similarities and differences and ask them to hypothesize explanations and generalizations based on their census information.
- e. Ask students to brainstorm a list of other resources they could use to substantiate their theories.

Map Skills

- 3. Ask students to extract geographical information from the population schedules of 1880 and 1900 to answer the following questions.
 - a. In what area of the Dakota Territory did the Ingalls family live?
 - b. In what area of Missouri did the Wilder family live?
 - c. Estimate the number of miles that Laura Ingalls Wilder traveled when she moved from the Dakota Territory to Missouri.
 - d. On a map, use colored pushpins and yarn or highlight lines to illustrate where the Ingalls and Wilder parents came from and trace the families' moves from where the parents were born to Missouri. (For a more complete tracing, students may wish to refer to the Little House books for clues.)
 - e. Followup: On a world map, use yarn or highlight lines to illustrate the movement of all the people enumerated on this page of the 1900 census from their places of origin to Wright County, MO.

Research and Synthesis

- 4. Ask students to examine the census of 1880 (or 1900) for their county. Direct students to write a paragraph describing the lifestyle of a typical family in that county in 1880 (or 1900) based only on information provided by the census. Students might include such topics as work, family, employment, and migration patterns.

Additional documents related to Laura Ingalls Wilder, including photographs and her father's Homestead Application, are available in the NAIL Database [http://www.archives.gov/research_room/nail/index.html]. NAIL is a searchable database that contains information about a wide variety of NARA holdings across the country. You can use NAIL to search record descriptions by keywords or topics and retrieve digital copies of select textual documents, photographs, maps, and sound recordings related to thousands of topics.

The papers of Rose Wilder Lane, Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter, are held by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. Visit the Hoover Library's Just For Kids web site [<http://hoover.archives.gov/kids/index.html>] for additional Ingalls family information.

For further information about the census, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's web site [<http://www.census.gov>].

Page URL: http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/laura_ingalls_wilder/teaching_activities.html

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Page No.

Supervisor's Dist. No.

Enumeration Dist. No.

Note A.—The Census Year begins June 1, 1879, and ends May 31, 1880.

Note B.—All persons will be included in the Enumeration who were living on the 1st day of June, 1880. No others will. Children BORN SINCE June 1, 1880, will be OMITTED. Members of Families who have DIED SINCE June 1, 1880, will be INCLUDED.

Note C.—Questions Nos. 13, 14, 22 and 23 are not to be asked in respect to persons under 10 years of age.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in De Smet, in the County of Kingsbury, State of Dakota, enumerated by me on the 7th day of June, 1880.

John H. Carroll

Enumerator.

Inhabitants		Personal Description		Relationship of each person to the head of the family		Place of Birth of the person		Place of Birth of the person		Place of Birth of the person	
No.	Sex	Name	Age	Relationship	Occupation	Place of Birth	State or Territory	Place of Birth	State or Territory	Place of Birth	State or Territory
1	M	Carroll, John H.	W M 31		Chief District Clerk	Pennsylvania	England	England			
	F	Kara R.	W F 25	wife	Housekeeper	Michigan	Tennessee	N. Y.			
	M	Louis B.	W M 14	Son	At home	Minnesota	Pa.	Mich.			
2	M	Finney, Ellen L.	W F 35	Sister-in-law	Teacher	Michigan	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Bradley, Jennie	W M 24		Druggist	Massachusetts	New York	N. Y.			
	F	Attie	W F 22	wife	Keeping house	Wisconsin	Ill.	Ill.			
3	M	Carroll, George E.	W M 14	Son	At home	Minnesota	Wis.	Wis.			
	M	Melmarck, George B.	W M 38		Grocery retail	Pennsylvania	Pa.	Pa.			
	M	Hogg, Henry	W M 26		Shoemaker	Minnesota	Pa.	Pa.			
4	M	Hull, Harry W.	W M 25	Partner	Merchant in shoe shop	Michigan	England	England			
	M	Barker, Charles P.	W M 35		Grocery retail	Canada	Eng.	Eng.			
	F	Elizabeth	W F 30	wife	Keeping house	Ill.	Eng.	Eng.			
	M	Edward A.	W M 2	Son	At home	Minnesota	Canada	Canada			
	M	Earl	W M 2 1/2	Son	At home	Minnesota	Canada	Canada			
	F	Dutton, Carrie	W F 15	Daughter	Servant	Wisconsin	Ill.	Ill.			
5	M	Ferguson, George H.	W M 29		Butcher	Canada	Ireland	Ireland			
	M	Hanahan, Edith M.	W M 39		Grocery retail	Maine	Maine	Maine			
	F	Frieda	W F 23	Son	Grocery retail	Minnesota	Mo.	Mo.			
6	M	Hordruff, Jerome	W M 17		Dealer in feed	New York	Conn.	Conn.			
	M	Memie	W M 23	Son	Iron laborer	Michigan	N. Y.	Canada			
	M	Core, Frank E.	W M 22		Retail grocer	Pennsylvania	Pa.	Pa.			
7	M	Bibson, Thomas	W M 34	Partner	Farmer	Wisconsin	Ill.	Ill.			
	M	Kennedy, David A.	W M 30		Dealer in agricultural implements	New York	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Fulker, Charles S.	W M 30		Dealer in hardware	New York	England	England			
	M	Gerald C.R.	W M 30	Brother	Dealer in agricultural implements	New York	Eng.	Eng.			
	M	Hoppe, Jacob W.	W M 23	Partner	Printer	Ill.	Ill.	Ill.			
	M	Barnes, Frederick	W M 29		Lawyer	New York	Eng.	Eng.			
8	M	Ingalls, Charles P.	W M 44		Farmer	New York	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Caroline	W F 40	wife	Keeping house	Wisconsin	Mass.	Mass.			
	F	Mary A.	W F 15	Daughter	Help in keeping house	Wisconsin	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Lana E.	W F 13	Daughter		Wisconsin	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Caroline C.	W F 9	Daughter		Wisconsin	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Grace L.	W F 3	Daughter		Ill.	N. Y.	N. Y.			
9	M	Master, George E.	W M 27		Clinton Store	New York	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Marjett	W F 23	wife	Housekeeper	Minnesota	Ireland	Ireland			
	M	George E.	W M 14	Son		Dakota	N. Y.	Minn.			
10	M	Cross, William H.	W M 22		Timberman	Wisconsin	England	England			
	M	Fincham, Charles H.	W M 26	Brother	Cabinet maker	Maine	Mo.	Mo.			
	M	McKen, James W.	W M 30		Material in goods	Pennsylvania	Pa.	Pa.			
	F	Maria E.	W F 30	wife	Keeping house	Ohio	Pa.	Pa.			
	F	Mary E.	W F 8	Daughter		Ill.	Pa.	Ohio			
11	M	Drake, Robert A.	W M 25		Farmer	Ohio	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Olson, Charles L.	W M 31		Dealer in goods	Wisconsin	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Ellen C.	W F 22	wife	Keeping house	Iowa	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	F	Nellie	W F 3	Daughter		Minnesota	N. Y.	Ill.			
	M	White, Thomas	W M 47	Partner	Keeper Hotel	New York	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Martha B.	W F 10	Daughter	Keeping house	New York	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Rein, Marcus W.	W M 37		Shoemaker	Norway	N. Y.	N. Y.			
	M	Leah	W F 27		Keeping house	Norway	N. Y.	N. Y.			

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

State Missouri County Reight Township or other division of county Pharant Valley Township Name of Institution X
 Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named division Manassah City Ward of city 1
 Enumerated by me on the 1 day of June 1900. Enumerator G. S. Kinsley

LOCATION		NAME		RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION										NATIVITY			CITIZENSHIP			OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION		EDUCATION				OTHER		
IN 1870		at each person's place of birth June 1, 1870, was in this family.			DATE OF BIRTH		AGE		SEX		COLOR		PLACE OF BIRTH OF THIS PERSON		PLACE OF BIRTH OF FATHER OF THIS PERSON		PLACE OF BIRTH OF MOTHER OF THIS PERSON		CITIZENSHIP			OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION		EDUCATION				OTHER	
1		2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
21-21	Kelley Ruth M.	Daughter	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
22-22	Smith Jas	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
23-23	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
24-24	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
25-25	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
26-26	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
27-27	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
28-28	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
29-29	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
30-30	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
31-31	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
32-32	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
33-33	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
34-34	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
35-35	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
36-36	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
37-37	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
38-38	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
39-39	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
40-40	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
41-41	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
42-42	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
43-43	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
44-44	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
45-45	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
46-46	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
47-47	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
48-48	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
49-49	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
50-50	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
51-51	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
52-52	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
53-53	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
54-54	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
55-55	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
56-56	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
57-57	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
58-58	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
59-59	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
60-60	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
61-61	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
62-62	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
63-63	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
64-64	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
65-65	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
66-66	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
67-67	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
68-68	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
69-69	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
70-70	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
71-71	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
72-72	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
73-73	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
74-74	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
75-75	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
76-76	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
77-77	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
78-78	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
79-79	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
80-80	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
81-81	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
82-82	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
83-83	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
84-84	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
85-85	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
86-86	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
87-87	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
88-88	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
89-89	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														
90-90	Smith John	Son	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri														

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Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):

<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Map	<input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Telegram	<input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record
<input type="checkbox"/> Patent	<input type="checkbox"/> Press release	<input type="checkbox"/> Census report
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum	<input type="checkbox"/> Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):

<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations
<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp
<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Seals	

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:

POSITION (TITLE):

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)

A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

B. Why do you think this document was written?

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

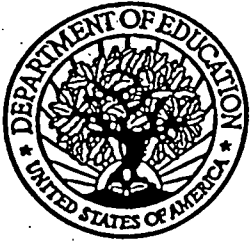
D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:

E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

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